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MONODY

TO THE

MEMORY

OF A

YOUNG LADY who died in Child-bed.

BY AN AFFLICTED HUSBAND.

Mr. Shaw, a Surgeon.
(a sweet Poem!)

In ev'ry varied posture, place, and hour,
How widow'd ev'ry thought of ev'ry joy? YOUNG.

——— *Præcipe lugubres*
Cantus, Melpomene ———

HOR.

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MONODY

TO THE

MEMORY

OF

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

As the claſſical reader may, perhaps, think the following lines too *ſimple* and *unadorned*; the author begs leave to premiſe, that, as the *cauſe was real*, and the various circumſtances alluded to have their foundation in *truth*, he has purpoſely avoided all *claſſical alluſions*, and *metaphorical embelliſhments*; chuſing rather to draw his ſentiments merely from the ſource of nature and his own feelings. All ornaments of this kind are certainly foreign to grief; and it would be altogether as ridiculous for a poet to make a diſplay

diſplay of his learning, on any occaſion where the heart is ſuppoſed to be affected, as if a perſon, bent on buſineſs of the utmoſt importance, ſhould ſtep out of his road to gather a noſegay.

MONODY

TO THE

MEMORY

OF A

YOUNG LADY.

YET do I live! O how ſhall I ſuſtain
This vaſt unutterable weight of woe?
This worſe than hunger, poverty, or pain,
Or all the complicated ills below—
She, in whoſe life my hopes were treaſur'd all,
Is gone—for ever fled—
My deareſt EMMA's dead.
Theſe eyes, theſe tear-ſwol'n eyes beheld her fall:
Ah no—ſhe lives on ſome far happier ſhore,
She lives—but (cruel thought!) ſhe lives for me no more.

II.

I, who the tedious abſence of a day
Remov'd, would languiſh for my charmer's ſight,
Wou'd chide the ling'ring moments for delay,
And fondly blame the ſlow return of night;
How, how ſhall I endure
(O mis'ry paſt a cure!)
Hours, days and years ſucceſſively to roll,
Nor ever more behold the comfort of my ſoul?

III.

Was ſhe not all my fondeſt wiſh cou'd frame?
Did ever mind ſo much of Heav'n partake?
Did ſhe not love me with the pureſt flame,
And give up friends and fortune for my ſake?
Tho' mild as ev'ning ſkies,
With downcaſt, ſtreaming eyes,
Stood the ſtern frown of ſupercilious brows,
Deaf to their brutal threats, and faithful to her vows.

IV.

Come, then, ſome muſe, the ſaddeſt of the train,
(No more your bard ſhall dwell on idle lays)
Teach me each moving melancholy ſtrain,
And O diſcard the pageantry of phraſe:
Ill ſuit the flow'rs of ſpeech with woes like mine!
Thus, haply, as I paint
The ſource of my complaint,
My ſoul may own th' impaſſion'd line;
A flood of tears may guſh to my relief,
And from my ſwelling heart diſcharge this load of grief.

V.

Forbear, my fond officious friends, forbear
To wound my ears with the ſad tales you tell;
" How good ſhe was, how gentle, and how fair!"
In pity ceaſe—alas! I know too well:
How, in her ſweet, expreſſive face
Beam'd forth the beauties of her mind,
Yet heighten'd by exterior grace
Of manners moſt engaging, moſt refin'd;

No piteous object cou'd ſhe ſee,
But her ſoft boſom ſhar'd the woe,
Whilſt ſmiles of affability
Endear'd whatever boon ſhe might beſtow.
Whate'er th' emotions of her heart,
Still ſhone conſpicuous in her eyes;
Stranger to ev'ry female art,
Alike to feign, or to diſguiſe:
And O the boaſt how rare!
The ſecret in her faithful breaſt repos'd,
She ne'er with lawleſs tongue diſclos'd,
In ſacred ſilence lodg'd inviolate there.
O feeble words—unable to expreſs
Her matchleſs virtues, or my own diſtreſs!

VI.

Relentleſs Death! that, ſteel'd to human woe,
With murd'rous hands deals havock on mankind,
Why (cruel!) ſtrike this deprecated blow,
And leave ſuch wretched multitudes behind?

Hark!

Hark! Groans come wing'd on ev'ry breeze,
The ſons of Grief prefer their ardent vow;
Oppreſs'd with ſorrow, want, or dire diſeaſe,
And ſupplicate thy aid, as I do now:
In vain—Perverſe, ſtill on th' unweeting head
'Tis thine thy vengeful darts to ſhed
Hope's infant bloſſoms to deſtroy,
And drench in tears the face of joy.
But oh! fell tyrant! yet expect the hour
When Virtue ſhall renounce thy pow'r;
When thou no more ſhalt blot the face of day,
Nor mortals tremble at thy rigid ſway.

VII.

Alas! the day—where-e'er I turn my eyes,
Some ſad memento of my loſs appears;
I fly the fatal houſe—ſuppreſs my ſighs,
Reſolv'd to dry my unavailing tears:
But, ah! in vain—no change of time or place
The mem'ry can efface

Of all that ſweetneſs, that enchanting air,
Now loſt; and nought remains, but anguiſh and deſpair.

VIII.

Where were the delegates of Heav'n, oh where!
Appointed Virtue's children ſafe to keep!
Had Innocence or Virtue been their care,
She had not dy'd, nor had I liv'd to weep:
Mov'd by my tears, and by her patience mov'd,
To ſee her force th' endearing ſmile
My ſorrows to beguile,
When Torture's keeneſt rage ſhe prov'd;
Sure they had warded that untimely dart,
Which broke her thread of life, and rent a huſband's heart.

IX.

How ſhall I e'er forget that dreadful hour,
When feeling Death's reſiſtleſs pow'r,
My hand ſhe preſs'd, wet with her falling tears,
And thus, in falt'ring accents, ſpoke her fears!

" Ah,

" Ah, my lov'd lord, the tranſient ſcene is o'er,
" And we muſt part (alas!) to meet no more!
" But oh! if e'er thy Emma's name was dear,
" If e'er thy vows have charm'd my raviſh'd ear;
" If, from thy lov'd embrace my heart to gain,
" Proud friends have frown'd, and Fortune ſmil'd in vain;
" If it has been my ſole endeavour, ſtill ——
" To act in all, obſequious to thy will;
" To watch thy very ſmiles, thy wiſh to know,
" Then only truly bleſt when thou wert ſo:
" If I have doated with that fond exceſs,
" Nor Love cou'd add, nor Fortune make it leſs;
" If this I've done, and more—oh then be kind
" To the dear lovely babe I leave behind.
" When time my once-lov'd memory ſhall efface,
" Some happier maid may take thy Emma's place,
" With envious eyes thy partial fondneſs ſee,
" And hate it for the love thou bore to me:
" My deareſt S—— forgive a woman's fears,
" But one word more (I cannot bear thy tears)

" Promiſe

" Promiſe—and I will truſt thy faithful vow,
" (Oft have I tried, and ever found thee true)
" That to ſome diſtant ſpot thou wilt remove
" This fatal pledge of hapleſs Emma's love,
" Where, ſafe, thy blandiſhments it may partake,
" And oh! be tender for its mother's ſake.
" Wilt thou?———
" I know thou wilt—ſad ſilence ſpeaks aſſent,
" And in that pleaſing hope thy Emma dies content."

X.

I, who, with more than manly ſtrength, have bore
The various ills impos'd by cruel fate,
Suſtain the firmneſs of my ſoul no more,
But ſink beneath the weight:
Juſt Heav'n (I cry'd) from mem'ry's earlieſt day
No comfort has thy wretched ſuppliant known,
Misfortune ſtill with unrelenting ſway
Has claim'd me for her own. ——

But

But Oh! in pity to my grief, reſtore
This only ſource of bliſs; I aſk—I aſk no more—
Vain hope—th' irrevocable doom is paſt,
Ev'n now ſhe looks—ſhe ſighs her laſt—
Vainly I ſtrive to ſtay her fleeting breath,
And, with rebellious heart, proteſt againſt her death.

XI.

When the ſtern tyrant clos'd her lovely eyes,
How did I rave, untaught to bear the blow!
With impious wiſh to tear her from the ſkies;
How curſe my fate in bitterneſs of woe!
But whither wou'd this dreadful frenzy lead?
Fond man forbear,
Thy fruitleſs ſorrow ſpare,
Dare not to taſk what Heav'n's high will decreed;
In humble rev'rence kiſs th' afflictive rod,
And proſtrate bow to an offended God.

XII.

Perhaps kind Heav'n in mercy dealt the blow,
Some ſaving truth thy roving ſoul to teach;
To wean thy heart from grov'ling views below,
And point out bliſs beyond Misfortune's reach:
To ſhew that all the flatt'ring ſchemes of joy,
Which tow'ring hope ſo fondly builds in air,
One fatal moment can deſtroy,
And plunge th' exulting Maniac in deſpair.
Then O! with pious fortitude ſuſtain
Thy preſent loſs—haply, thy future gain;
Nor let thy Emma die in vain:
Time ſhall adminiſter its wonted balm,
And huſh this ſtorm of grief to no unpleaſing calm.

XIII.

Thus the poor bird, by ſome diſaſt'rous fate
Caught and impriſon'd in a lonely cage,
Torn from its native fields, and dearer mate,
Flutters awhile, and ſpends its little rage:

But, finding all its efforts weak and vain,
No more it pants and rages for the plain;
Moping awhile, in ſullen mood
Droops the ſweet mourner—but, ere long,
Prunes its light wings, and pecks its food,
And meditates the ſong:
Serenely ſorrowing, breathes it's piteous caſe,
And with its plaintive warblings ſaddens all the place.

XIV.

Forgive me, Heav'n—yet—yet the tears will flow,
To think how ſoon my ſcene of bliſs is paſt,
My budding joys, juſt promiſing to blow,
All nipp'd and wither'd by one envious blaſt!
My laughing hours, that wont to fleet away,
Move heavily along;
Where's now the ſprightly jeſt, the jocund ſong?
Time creeps unconſcious of delight:
How ſhall I cheat the tedious day?
And O the joyleſs night!

Where

Where ſhall I reſt my weary head;
How ſhall I find repoſe on a ſad widow'd bed?

XV.

Come † Theban drug, the wretch's only aid,
To my torn heart its former peace reſtore;
Thy vot'ry, wrap'd in thy Lethean ſhade,
Awhile ſhall ceaſe his ſorrows to deplore:
Haply, when lock'd in Sleep's embrace,
Again I ſhall behold my EMMA's face;
Again with tranſport hear
Her voice, ſoft whiſp'ring in my ear;
May ſteal once more a balmy kiſs,
And taſte, at leaſt, of viſionary bliſs.

XVI.

But ah! th' unwelcome morn's obtruding light
Will all my ſhadowy ſchemes of bliſs depoſe,
Will tear the dear illuſion from my ſight,
And wake me to the ſenſe of all my woes:

† Laudanum.

If to the verdant fields I ſtray,
Alas! what pleaſures NOW can theſe convey?
Her lovely form purſues where'er I go,
And darkens all the ſcene with woe.
By Nature's laviſh bounties chear'd no more,
Sorrowing I rove
Through valley, grot, and grove;
Nought can THEIR beauties or MY loſs reſtore;
No herb, no plant, can med'cine my diſeaſe,
And my ſad ſighs are borne on ev'ry paſſing breeze.

XVII.

Sickneſs and ſorrow hov'ring round my bed,
Who NOW with anxious haſte ſhall bring relief,
With lenient hand ſupport my drooping head,
Aſſwage my pains, and mitigate my grief?
Shou'd worldly buſineſs call away,
Who NOW ſhall in my abſence fondly mourn,
Count ev'ry minute of the loitering day,
Impatient for my quick return?

Shou'd aught my boſom diſcompoſe,
Who now, with ſweet complacent air,
Shall ſmooth the rugged brow of care,
And ſoften all my woes?
Too faithful mem'ry—Ceaſe, O ceaſe—
How ſhall I e'er regain my peace?
(O to forget her)—but how vain each art,
Whilſt ev'ry virtue lives imprinted on my heart.

XVIII.

And thou, my little cherub, left behind,
To hear a father's plaints, to ſhare his woes,
When Reaſon's dawn inſorms thy infant mind,
And thy ſweet-liſping tongue ſhall aſk the cauſe,
How oft with ſorrow ſhall mine eyes run o'er,
When, twining round my knees, I trace
Thy mother's ſmile upon thy face?
How oft to my full heart ſhalt thou reſtore
Sad mem'ry of my joys—ah now no more!
By bleſſings once enjoy'd n w more diſtreſt,
More beggar by the riches once poſſeſt.

XIX

My little darling!—dearer to me grown
By all the tears thou'ſt caus'd—(O ſtrange to hear!)
Bought with a life yet dearer than thy own,
Thy cradle purchas'd with thy mother's bier:
Who now ſhall ſeek, with fond delight,
Thy infant ſteps to guide aright?
She who, with doating eyes, wou'd gaze
On all thy little artleſs ways;
By all thy ſoft endearments bleſt,
And claſp thee oft with tranſport to her breaſt,
Alas! is gone—Yet ſhalt thou prove
A father's deareſt, tend'reſt love:
And O! ſweet ſenſeleſs ſmiler (envied ſtate!)
As yet unconſcious of thy hapleſs fate,
When years thy judgment ſhall mature,
And Reaſon ſhews thoſe ills it cannot cure,
Wilt thou, a father's grief t' aſſwage,
For virtue prove the Phœnix of the earth?
(Like her, thy mother dy'd to give thee birth)
And be the comfort of my age?

When ſick and languiſhing I lie;
Wilt thou my Emma's wonted care ſupply?
And oft, as, to thy liſt'ning ear,
Thy mother's virtues and her fate I tell,
Say, wilt thou drop the tender tear,
Whilſt on the mournful theme I dwell?
Then, fondly ſtealing to thy father's ſide,
Whene'er thou ſee'ſt the ſoft diſtreſs,
Which I wou'd vainly ſeek to hide,
Say, wilt thou ſtrive to make it leſs;
To ſooth my ſorrows all thy cares employ,
And in my cup of grief infuſe one drop of joy?

FINIS.